

fear the repercussions of further cuts. The plates answer the question: What would happen to you if SNAP benefits are cut?

Heather C. in Chicago said that it's already hard enough to feed her children as it is, and cutting SNAP would mean her kids would suffer. She says, "My food stamps stretch out for about 2 weeks out of the month, so if I didn't have them, then it would cost me an extra \$250 a month to feed my children. Food these days is so expensive, and the more help we can get to feed our kids the better."

And, by the way, most of the people on the SNAP program are on just for a temporary amount of time, just like the Congresswoman said, to bridge a gap when they're really in need.

Jack K. worked for decades as a taxicab driver but retired with very little wealth. He says now, "I now live in subsidized housing and depend upon soup kitchens and food pantries for food."

An anonymous client from Chicago writes that if SNAP benefits are cut, "it would be impossible for me to feed my four children every day. It's bad enough that because of this recession there's a lack of jobs. That alone makes it difficult to provide for them. These programs give people the temporary help they need to be okay until a job is obtained. Please take into consideration the children who depend on their parents for survival."

One commenter said she needs the program because she lost her life savings to cover medical costs which continue to this day. "Instead of being middle class, I am now living below the poverty level," she says. "Without assistance, I would be back in a homeless shelter. As it is now, I am unable to afford utilities, between my rent and medical expenses."

And Robert B. in Chicago said the bad economy has left him in long-term unemployment. "I lost everything. If my benefits were cut, I wouldn't eat for awhile."

We have options in this wealthiest country in the world. For example, I've introduced H.R. 1124, the Fairness in Taxation Act, which would raise revenues by increasing tax rates on the 1 percent richest Americans. Income over \$1 million a year would be taxed at 45 percent, moving up to 49 percent for income over \$1 billion. And, by the way, that's lower than during the Reagan years.

So I invite my colleagues to join me in the Food Stamp Challenge and learn, just even for a week, what it's like to live on \$1.50 a meal.

IT'S TIME TO THANK OUR WARRIORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Good morning, Mr. Speaker. It's really a pleasure to have the opportunity to

speak this morning and to congratulate President Obama for keeping his promise and keeping his promise to the American people.

I've had the privilege of traveling to Iraq on many occasions, the privilege of greeting our soldiers coming from Texas, Houston, and all over America. I've had the sadness of attending the memorials and funeral services of fallen soldiers, the sadness of talking to parents and relatives asking the question: "Why?" I've even gone and mourned with mothers around the issue of convincing Presidents, in this instance, President Bush, to end the war.

I've been amidst tiny white crosses that have symbolized the numbers of those who died in Iraq; and in my office, for a period of time, we accounted for the numbers of individuals who died in Iraq, in particular, from the State of Texas.

I cochair the Afghan Caucus. In times that I have gone to Iraq in the Green Zone that is familiar to many, I've even taken enemy fire; and that is, of course, enemy fire attempting to hit those in the Green Zone, nothing in comparison to our soldiers and certainly never experienced the heinous act of an IED.

It is time to bring those warriors home and to say thank you, spending almost \$900 billion, close to \$1 trillion. And I'd like to see the amendment that I passed in the Defense authorization bill utilized. It was a national proclamation, a day to welcome home all of our combat veterans. It would include those who have fought wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and other wars in times past and other incidents around the world.

It's time to have a celebration and a response to our soldiers like we've never had before. It's time to place ribbons; it's time to stand in streets; it's time to celebrate through parades. And I would commend those who have served and continue to serve and our veterans. It seems that that is the appropriate response.

And how silly it seems that in the State of Texas we have to be fighting the potential implementation of a Confederate flag. We had a press conference in my district with persons from around the State and around the county standing up against the State-issued Confederate flag. In fact, we announced for the State of Texas: Why couldn't we put the American flag on our plates, our license plates, to symbolize our commitment to our soldiers and our respect for the unity of this Nation?

But yet, under Governor Perry, we are fooling around with the idea, with his appointees, of a Confederate flag license plate, one that does not honor the Confederate soldier. For those who wish to honor them, there are places and museums in your home. But to put on the State license plate a flag that symbolized fear, intimidation, oppressive actions, brutality, slavery, and the

death of slaves, some 20 million that came over, many that were thrown overboard, and the brutality of Jim Crowism is an outrage and will not be tolerated.

While there is continued growth of millions of millionaires and the average salary in the United States is \$26,000, it seems that we should stay focused on job creation and not be distracted in a State as large as Texas, with the largest majority minority community of Latinos and African Americans and the largest number of uninsured, that the government of the State of Texas would take time to fool around with a Confederate flag, a hostile symbol that is so egregious to many in this country.

□ 1110

And so, Mr. Speaker, I hope that Congress will focus on passing the jobs bill, recognizing the need of the American people. I hope my colleagues will look toward States that would create a hostile atmosphere such as a Confederate license plate in a way that would show that many times they're not worthy of receiving Federal funds if they want to spend their time spending money on something as dastardly as that—and I come from the State—because there are so many needs, such as was mentioned earlier by my colleagues, in the limitations in the SNAP and food stamps where children are starving.

Why don't we focus on the goodness of bringing us together such as my earlier comment of welcoming home our troops with a national proclamation pursuant to the amendment that I passed on this floor of the House 419-0? Why don't we get rid of things like Confederate flag symbols that represent oppression? And why don't we come together in this Congress to pass the President's American Jobs Act so salaries are not going down? And why don't we hold States accountable when they get Federal dollars that if they don't hire small businesses and those who are unemployed, Mr. Speaker, that we cut their Federal funds? And I truly mean that.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your indulgence. Again, let's get rid of the bad things in the United States, such as symbols of Confederate flags insulting much of the American people, let's support SNAP, let's support people going to work, and let's make sure that there are people earning more than \$26,000 by getting them back to work.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 12 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Morris Matthis, Christ United Methodist Church, Sugar Land, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, who is the giver of every good and perfect gift and who has blessed us with this good land and fashioned us into one united people, grant wisdom to those whom in Your name we entrust the authority of government.

Guide them, O God, in their deliberations and in their decisionmaking. Grant them the grace to see themselves as leaders who stand in the shadow of history. Bless them with the humility and insight of Abraham Lincoln, who said: "I have been driven many times to my knees with the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go."

Give them the assurance that when the hour is desperate and the way unclear, there is one to whom they can go, and then, O God, in Your Mercy, help them to go there.

In the name of the One who is the Hope of the world, amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. OLSON led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

WELCOMING REVEREND MORRIS MATTHIS

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, one of the privileges we have as Members of Congress is to have the leader of a church back home deliver the opening prayer

for the United States House of Representatives. Today, I'm proud to introduce America to my home pastor, Morris Matthis.

Morris has had a tremendous spiritual influence on my family and me. When we moved back to Texas, my wife and I worried about uprooting our two children from the only home they'd ever known. But we shouldn't have worried. We found Morris and the amazing people at Christ United Methodist Church in Sugar Land, Texas. They welcomed us with open arms, and have loved us ever since.

During his tenure at Christ United Methodist Church, Morris and his team—his wife, Jepilyn; his son, Kyle; and his daughter, Amy—have made sure that every single man, woman, and child who has walked through our church's doors has felt the peace, the love, and the faith that embraced my family.

Whatever I do in Congress, however long I'm here, I'll have no fonder memory than my pastor, Morris Matthis, standing before the American people in prayer for our great Nation.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS of New Hampshire). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

THE MONTFORD POINT MARINES

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Later today the House will consider H.R. 2447, a bill awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to the Montford Point Marines, the first African Americans to serve in the United States Marine Corps. The United States of America owes these heroes a debt of honor that we will endeavor to pay, in part, today. I rise in strong support of this measure.

It was President Franklin Roosevelt who issued an Executive order in June of 1941 that opened the doors for African Americans to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. Between 1942 and 1949, approximately 20,000 African Americans earned the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor at Camp Montford Point in Jacksonville, North Carolina. And we'll honor them today.

I especially want to commend the Montford Point Marines Indianapolis chapter's surviving marines. And since there are no "former marines," allow me to commend Marine Averitte Corley, Johnny Washington, and Lancaster Price, along with the late Walter Ezzell and Everette Sweat, who have done yeoman's work in keeping the proud memory of the Montford Point Marines alive in the Hoosier State.

The Congressional Gold Medal is a fitting tribute to the Montford Point

Marines. It marks the service and sacrifice of these trailblazing heroes, but it also marks our Nation's mark toward a more perfect union, and I heartily endorse it.

HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong opposition to cuts in the Home Energy Assistance Program, or HEAP as it is known in New York.

With snow in Buffalo forecast this week, it seems unconscionable to slash this essential aid that helps seniors afford their heating bills. However, the House Labor-HHS bill would do just that. It cuts HEAP and changes the formula in a way that penalizes New York and other cold-weather States.

New York's allocation would be cut by \$179 million, or 34 percent, from its current levels. As a result, HEAP assistance will be smaller, later, and benefit fewer New Yorkers. At a time when western New York heating prices are expected to increase, these cuts would force seniors and families to choose between heating their homes, putting food on the table, or purchasing prescription drugs.

I urge Congress to reject these cuts which threaten to leave many of the 235,000 HEAP recipients in Erie and Chautauqua counties out in the cold.

THE COST OF SENATE INACTION

(Mr. HULTGREN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that by the end of this year another ratings agency may downgrade our Nation's sovereign debt. Why? Because they don't believe there's a plan to return our Nation to fiscal health. Well, they're not entirely right. In July, we passed the Cut, Cap, and Balance Act. It was a common-sense solution that would have maintained our Nation's strong credit rating. The bill went to the cul-de-sac called the Senate where, as so many things have, it died. Maybe that's not surprising.

Cut, Cap, and Balance would not only have cut spending, it would have changed the way Washington works. It would have made structural change.

For a do-nothing Senate that has not bothered to pass a budget in over 900 days, the idea of spending cuts and fiscal accountability must be utterly foreign. Once again, we see the high cost of their inaction.

□ 1210

INVESTING IN INNOVATION AND EDUCATION

(Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia asked and was given permission to address